

EDITORIAL

THIS WEEK'S PAPER—SOME RANDOM COMMENT.

The first thing in The Progressive Farmer this week is Professor Kilgore's summary of his official tests of concentrated feeding stuffs—stock foods—which farmers are now buying in such large quantities. So valuable is the advertising patronage of these stock food companies that very few farm papers care to tell their readers just how exorbitant the prices of many are, considered as food, and how nearly worthless many are, considered as medicine. Watch for the reports in the December Agricultural Bulletin when it comes.

"Reader," who gives us such an entertaining review of our last number, is one of the best known farmers in the State, but his name is withheld at his request. In a personal note to the Editor, he says: "I believe such articles are helpful to men who write for farm papers, but it is best that said writers do not know who compliments them; so if you publish this matter, I ask you not to give my name, or postoffice, to any of your force or contributors."

Harry Farmer who talked about the flower garden last week, takes the vegetable garden as his subject this time. As this is the season of year when interest centres in this topic, we should like to have it discussed by other readers.

Mr. J. B. Hunnicutt, Editor of the Southern Cultivator, furnishes us a first-class article on sweet potatoes.

Mr. J. H. Parker's promised article "On the Folly of Increased Cotton Acreage" appears in this number, and our cotton-growing readers will find it worth a second reading.

In "Building up a Beef Herd," Dr. Burkett, as usual, gets right into actual touch with his subject, and says something of practical value. One of the great objects of The Progressive Farmer is to develop a stronger interest in stock-raising, and we shall always be glad to hear from readers desiring further information about any phase of the matter.

The Wake County branch of the Woman's Association for the Improvement of Country School-houses, as will be seen from our news columns, offers two scholarships in the A. & M. College Summer School, covering board, tuition, and railway fare, to the two teachers in the county making the greatest improvement in buildings and grounds during the present scholastic year. This seems to us to be an excellent plan for developing an interest in this important matter, and we should like to see it tested in other counties.

We are glad to print the reports of the County Alliance meetings, and we can assure our Edgecombe brethren, whose resolution we printed last week, that we shall do all in our power to help forward the good work Lecturer Cates is doing. Of course, however, The Progressive Farmer is first of all a general farmers' paper, and organization is only one of the numerous good things our heart is set on bringing about.

We commend to all our readers the article on page 6, "How a Trim Farm Yard Helps." We need more beauty in the country, and an organization to promote the adornment of country homes, might well work hand in hand with the Society for the Improvement of Country School-houses.

Our Social Chat is taking on new life along with the other departments of the paper. We are safe in promising that it will be better than ever this year.

The good roads movement is going forward steadily. Observe on page 10 that the Maryland Grange has endorsed the Brownlow idea. This Brownlow Bill, by the way, provides that each county or State using any part of the National appropriation must duplicate the amount so used from its own funds. The bill calls for \$48,000,000

to be divided among the States in proportion to population, and this would give North Carolina \$584,000; Virginia, \$538,000; South Carolina, \$388,000; Georgia, \$642,000, and Tennessee, \$585,000.

Persons who think of buying seed corn should not overlook the little note from Dr. Henry Wallace on page 11.

Prof. Gerald McCarthy has an announcement regarding silk growing on page 11. It will be observed that the Department of Agriculture has silk worm eggs for sale to all January applicants.

Prof. Kilgore's series of letters on fertilizers announced for this issue, will begin next week. They are worth waiting for.

A STRIKING PLEA FOR RURAL SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The most striking plea for rural school libraries that has yet come to our notice is found in the following letter from a young business man of one of our Southern States—a young man who left a small cotton farm something less than twenty years ago and has now won success in his chosen field of effort. We publish the letter because we believe it will stimulate some of our readers to new and more vigorous effort to get good literature before their children and their neighbor's children:

"I am glad to know," he writes, "that you are doing so much to encourage the establishment of rural libraries in North Carolina. From my own experience as a country boy, I know how painfully keen is the scarcity of good literature in our farming sections. I was thinking about the matter only last night. As a boy in my teens, I borrowed the books of all the neighbors around me—yes, I remember some of them now: an 1810 edition of 'Franklin's Autobiography,' from a cousin; 'John Ploughman's Talks,' from a minister I knew; an old 'Life of Lincoln,' from Mr. R—; a copy of 'Tennyson's Poems,' which a University student lent me in 1885; 'Hawthorne's Tales,' from another cousin, and 'The Royal Path of Life,' owned by my uncle. All these are as deeply impressed on my memory as are the few green oases on the memory of a Sahara traveler. I am reminded, too, that one of the village merchants often left his latest copy of Harper's Magazine lying on the counter, and I preferred to trade with him because of the opportunities to snatch a few minutes' reading while I waited. A page of the Ladies' Home Journal that I found near the depot many years ago is still remembered; and some lines of a great poem that I first read on a torn page of the Nashville Christian Advocate—picked up in the public road as I went on to the little one-room school-house—are still fresh in my memory. And The Youth's Companion—its were angel visits, few and far between. My father, a small farmer, had lost his little all in a business venture, the farm was under mortgage, and several bad crop years in succession had borne heavily on us. So the subscription price of the Companion was higher than we felt we could afford, but I remember how eagerly I looked forward each fall to its annual 'announcement' in our church paper—ending usually with the offer to send sample copies to interested persons. Never did I fail to avail myself of this offer, and great was my joy when I finally subscribed for a full year. * * * I judge, however, that I must have been an exception. I reckon that almost no other country boy feels quite as sorely and continually as I felt, a gnawing, unutterable longing for food intellectual. But I know that to some extent this same soul-hunger is felt in every country school, and I am telling you my own experience because I think it may encourage you to redouble your efforts in behalf of the school libraries. For my own part, I would gladly, cheerfully, give the cost of one of these libraries twice over, just to have had the privilege of being one of those to use it in the little country school I attended."

"WE MUST HEAR FROM YOU BY FEBRUARY 1."

"We must hear from you by February 1st."

If these words, kind reader, have a strangely familiar ring to you,—well, there's no use saying: you know what to do. And this note is just a gentle, very gentle, reminder that it is very nearly time you were doing that thing. Unless all signs fail, our January records are going to show the biggest list of renewals and new subscribers received during any month for ten years past. But we are also spending more money on the paper than ever before, and we just can't give you a live, up-to-date paper if we are forced to carry old debts for you. So again we say—

"We must hear from you by February 1st."

The banks, however, have a custom of allowing "three days of grace," and we are going to adopt it this time. The three days of grace will carry the time to February 4th, and we shall not trouble you if you respond by that time. Don't fail, please, to get your letter to us before that time. It will save needless worry and expense, and you would feel better and we should feel better if this "little matter between us" were cleared up once for all. Let's do it and have done with it.

"We must hear from you by February 1st"—plus the three days of grace.

HOW MANY ACRES SHALL WE PUT TO COTTON?

We wonder how many people have asked this question this year. But now what are we going to do about it? To me, it is not so important how big the acreage is going to be, but how well the work is to be done; not the extent of the crop, but the condition of the soil and the manner of cultivation. These are the important factors that should control the situation.

Don't you think that a good many of us are inclined to attempt to do a little more than we are really able to do? We see good prospects on every hand of money in cotton; we look the situation in the face and flatly and squarely decide to do more than we have done before. But kind friends, had we not better go a little slower? Would we not in the end profit ourselves more by not attempting quite so much; and what we do, that do well and thoroughly. Maybe I am wrong, but I have always felt and experienced that 25 acres well taken care of, will mean more than 40 that are scratched over, hurriedly planted, and poorly cultivated.

And then again: Don't you think that a good many of us are going to forget nearly everything else in our eagerness to grow cotton. Isn't hay going to be a little scarce next year? or corn, or pork? Don't you feel sometimes that we are going to neglect some of the other crops that are paying us just as well as cotton? I feel this way. I feel that just now is a pretty good time to raise some potatoes, for in a year or so our neighbors will want some seed. Yes, hays will take a climb shortly and we won't have any to sell or even for ourselves. It looks this way to me. And so I am really anxious to see a few more hogs, a few more sheep; a good many more cattle and corn and hay raised next year than ever before.

We can do these things, you know, and at no expense to our regular, standard crops. I hope many of us can arrange to grow more hay and livestock this coming year.

Let us remember that safety comes with diversity: if cotton is short or low in price these other

C. W. BURKETT.

We are glad to see that the bill for increasing the salaries of rural mail carriers is rapidly growing in favor. One of the carriers writing in regard to our editorial last weeks says: "The hope of Congress increasing carriers' salaries is the only thing that keeps me from resigning. There is not a decent living in it at present." And there are many others who feel just as he does.